



black crappie

Pomoxis nigromaculatus

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Chordata - vertebrates
Class:	Osteichthyes
Order:	Perciformes
Family:	Centrarchidae

Features

The black crappie is a deep-bodied fish, flattened side to side. Its back is arched in front of the dorsal fin and dips over the eye giving it a “hump-backed” appearance. It has a green back, silver or white sides with black or green speckles, and a silver or white belly. The anal fin is nearly as long as the dorsal fin. The dorsal fin has seven or eight spines, differing from that of the white crappie that has six. The dorsal, tail, and anal fins are heavily pigmented with black. The black crappie may attain a length of over 14 inches and weigh over two pounds.

Natural History

The black crappie lives in creeks, rivers, lakes, and ponds. It prefers clear water with little or no current and many hiding places like submerged logs and plants. It eats insects, small fish, and crustaceans. It moves in groups around submerged objects and may be found at depths of 15 feet or more but moves to shallow water to spawn. It reaches maturity at two to three years. Spawning occurs in April through June.

The male builds a nest by fanning his fins over the bottom. The female deposits 29,000 to 147,000 eggs that hatch in three to eight days. The male guards the eggs.

Habitats

Constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs; interior rivers and streams; natural lakes and prairie marshes; Mississippi River; Missouri River

Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

statewide

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.